



simple steps...to protect kids

spring 2002
volume 3 number 3

Environmental Health News for 5-Star Childcare Facilities

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This newsletter is provided by the Indiana Department of Environmental Management for child care facilities participating in the 5-Star Environmental Recognition Program. This newsletter provides updates on environmental issues affecting children. Please feel free to use these articles in your own newsletters. We encourage you to post this in areas where parents will have access to it.

If you have any questions or comments about the information included here, please contact Karen Teliha at 800-988-7901.

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Smoke-Free Home!

Secondhand smoke affects everyone, but children are especially vulnerable because they are still growing and developing. EPA has created a new national Smoke-Free Home Pledge Initiative to motivate parents to protect their children.

Exposure to secondhand smoke causes serious health effects in children, including bronchitis, pneumonia, ear infections, worsened asthma and even sudden infant death syndrome. For children, particularly young children, the most likely place of exposure is their home.



In the U.S., 27% of homes with children, aged six and younger currently allow smoking, affecting approximately 9-12 million children each year.

The good news is that parents can take action to protect their children from secondhand smoke. The Smoke-Free Home Pledge Initiative includes a national media campaign highlighting the effects of secondhand smoke and sending the message that until you can quit, smoke outside.

The initiative also includes the "Take the Smoke-Free Home Pledge" brochure, an automated toll-free hotline (800-513-1157) that people can call and make their pledge, and the Smoke-Free Home Kit, which includes a certificate, and a magnet and is mailed to those who make the pledge.

Text provided by EPA.

World Asthma Day 2002

World Asthma Day 2002 is May 7 and serves as a kickoff event to Asthma and Allergy Month during May. The theme for the fourth annual World Asthma Day is Communities Working for Life and Breath. Take time this month to celebrate asthma awareness by encouraging parents to "Take it Outside" and not expose their children to secondhand smoke.

Start by taking the pledge at your Home Childcare Facility!



HOW TO MANAGE YOUR CHILD'S INDOOR ENVIRONMENT

Americans spend about 90% of their time indoors. So, managing your child's indoor environment is an important step in reducing exposure to the things that can trigger asthma attacks. Asthma triggers vary from person to person. You and your doctor should determine a plan to reduce the triggers that most affect your child. Listed below are several common indoor environmental triggers and some actions you can take to reduce your child's exposure.

SECONDHAND SMOKE

Asthma can be triggered by the smoke from the burning end of a cigarette, pipe, or cigar, or the smoke breathed out by a smoker.

What You Can Do: Choose not to smoke in your home or car, and do not allow others to do so either.

PETS

Your pet's skin flakes, urine, and saliva can be asthma triggers.

What You Can Do: Consider keeping pets outdoors or even finding a new home for your pets, if necessary. Keep pets out of the bedroom and other sleeping areas at all times, and keep the door closed. Keep pets away from fabric-covered furniture, carpets, and stuffed toys.

DUST MITES

Dust mites are too small to be seen, but are found in every home. They live in mattresses, pillows, carpets, fabric-covered furniture, bedcovers, clothes, and stuffed toys.

What You Can Do: Wash sheets and blankets once a week in hot water. Choose washable stuffed toys, wash them often in hot water, and dry thoroughly. Keep stuffed toys off beds. Cover mattresses and pillows in dust proof (allergen impermeable) zippered covers.

PESTS

Droppings or body parts of pests such as cockroaches or rodents can be asthma triggers.

What You Can Do: Do not leave food or garbage out. Store food in airtight containers. Clean all food crumbs or spilled liquids right away. Try using poison baits, boric acid (for cockroaches), or traps first before using pesticide sprays. If sprays are used: limit the spray to infested area. Carefully follow instructions on the label. Make sure there is plenty of fresh air when you spray, and keep the person with asthma out of the room.

MOLDS

Molds grow on damp materials. The key to mold control is moisture control. If mold is a problem in your home, clean up the mold and get rid of excess water or moisture. Lowering the moisture also helps reduce other triggers, such as dust mites and cockroaches.

What You Can Do: Wash mold off hard surfaces and dry completely. Absorbent materials with mold, such as ceiling tiles and carpet, may need to be replaced. Fix leaky plumbing or other sources of water. Use exhaust fans or open windows in kitchens and bathrooms when showering, cooking, or using the dishwasher. Vent clothes dryers to the outside. Maintain low indoor humidity, ideally between 30-50%.



To speak with an Asthma Information Specialist, please call (800) 315-8056, Monday through Friday, between 9am and 8pm EST.

Asthma in the Child Care Setting

What is Asthma?

Asthma is a chronic breathing disorder and is the most common chronic health problem among children. Children with asthma have attacks of coughing, wheezing, and shortness of breath, which may be very serious. These symptoms are caused by spasms of the air passages in the lungs. The air passages swell, become inflamed, and fill with mucus, making breathing difficult. Many asthma attacks occur when children get respiratory infections, including infections caused by common cold viruses. Attacks can also be caused by: exposure to cigarette smoke, stress, strenuous exercise, weather conditions, including cold, windy, or rainy days, allergies to animals, dust, pollen, or mold, indoor air pollutants, such as paint, cleaning materials, chemicals, or perfumes, or outdoor air pollutants, such as ozone.

What should child care providers do?

As with any child with a chronic condition, the child care provider and parents should discuss specific needs of the child and whether they can be sufficiently met by the provider. Some people believe that smaller-sized child care centers or family child care home environments may be more beneficial to a child with asthma because exposure to common respiratory viruses may be reduced. However, this has not been proven to be true.

Children with asthma may be prescribed medications to relax the small air passages and/or to prevent passages from becoming inflamed. These medications may need to be administered every day or only during attacks. Asthma medication is available in several forms, including liquid, powder, and pill, or it can be breathed in from an inhaler or com-

pressor. The child care provider should be given clear instructions on how and when to administer all medications and the name and telephone number of the child's doctor.

What's an Asthma Action Plan?

The child care provider should be provided with and keep on file an asthma action plan for each child with asthma. An asthma action plan lists emergency information, activities or conditions likely to trigger an asthma attack, current medications being taken, medications to be administered by the child care provider, and steps to be followed if the child has an acute asthma attack. Additional support from the child's health care providers should be available to the child care provider as needed.

If a child with asthma has trouble breathing:

1. Stop the child's activity and remove whatever is causing the allergic reaction, if you know what it is.
2. Calm the child; give medication prescribed, if any, for an attack.
3. Contact the parents.
4. If the child does not improve very quickly, and the parents are unavailable, call the child's doctor.
5. If the child is unable to breathe, call 911.
6. Record the asthma attack in the child's file. Describe the symptoms, how the child acted during the attack, what medicine was given, and what caused the attack, if known.

How can I prevent an asthma attack?

Most children with asthma can lead a normal life, but may often have to restrict their activity. Some preventive measures for reducing asthma attacks include:

Avoiding allergic agents such as dust, plush carpets, feather pillows, and dog and cat dander.

Installing low-pile carpets, vacuuming daily, and dusting frequently can help to reduce allergic agents.

A child who is allergic to dogs or cats may need to be placed in a facility without pets.

Stopping exercise if the child begins to breathe with difficulty or starts to wheeze.

Avoiding strenuous exercise.

Avoiding cold, damp weather. A child with asthma may need to be kept inside on cold, damp days or taken inside immediately if cold air triggers an attack.

NHTSA Repeats Rollover Warning To Users of 15-Passenger Vans

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) issued a cautionary warning to users of 15-passenger vans because of an increased rollover risk under certain conditions. The risk of rollover increases dramatically as the number of occupants increases from fewer than five to more than ten. In fact, 15-passenger vans (with 10 or more occupants) had a rollover rate in single vehicle crashes that is nearly three times the rate of those that were lightly loaded.

Because of these risks, it is important that 15-passenger vans be operated by experienced drivers. NHTSA urges that institutions using 15-passenger vans require seat belt use at all times. Eighty percent of those who died nationwide in 15-passenger van rollovers in 2000 were not buckled up. Wearing seat belts dramatically increases the chances of survival during a rollover crash.

5-Star Program Receives National Award

Indiana received a national award from The Council of State Governments for its unique 5 Star Environmental Recognition Program for Child Care Facilities.



Judy O'Bannon, first lady of Indiana, accepted CSG's Innovations Award on behalf of the state at a recognition ceremony. "Indiana is honored to be recognized for IDEM's innovative program," O'Bannon said. "Indiana is the first state in the nation to implement such a bold environmental education campaign for child care facilities and we continue to be the state that other states look to for help when they want to develop similar programs. We're honored by and proud of CSG's recognition."

CSG executive director, said, "Indiana's program is a model for the nation. CSG is proud to name this program among the best in the country."

CSG's Innovations Awards Program is the only one of its kind in the nation that focuses exclusively on state programs and policies, and selects winners based on evaluations by state government officials. Each year CSG selects eight state programs and policies that represent the best approaches in the nation to solving significant problems within state government.

Indiana emerged the winner from more than 350 applications submitted for consideration in 2001.

"The true success story here is that more Hoosier children are learning and playing in safer environments than ever before," Kaplan said. "I hope that eventually all licensed facilities will join our program." To date more than 70 Hoosier child care facilities have protected an estimated 1,750 children from environmental threats.

SECOND EDITION OF GUIDELINES FOR OUT-OF-HOME CHILD CARE PUBLISHED

Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Standards — Guidelines for Out-of-Home Child Care (2nd ed.) has been published by the National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care in cooperation with the American Academy of Pediatrics; the American Public Health Association; and the Maternal and Child Health Bureau, Health Resources and Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. This nine-chapter volume has been updated to include standards based on new knowledge about topics such as infant sleep position, infectious diseases, chronic illness, and nutrition requirements. Searchable and downloadable versions are available on the National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care's Web site at nrc.uchsc.edu/CFOC/index.html **(There is an asthma care plan in one of the addenda)**



Manufacturers to Use New Wood Preservatives, Replacing Most Residential Uses of CCA

On February 12, 2002, EPA announced a voluntary decision by industry to move consumer use of treated lumber products away from a variety of pressure-treated wood that contains arsenic by December 31, 2003, in favor of new alternative wood preservatives. This transition affects virtually all residential uses of wood treated with chromated copper arsenate, also known as CCA, including wood used in play-structures, decks, picnic tables, landscaping timbers, residential fencing, patios and walkways/boardwalks. By January 2004, EPA will not allow CCA products for any of these residential uses. This decision will facilitate the voluntary transition to new alter-

native wood preservatives that do not contain arsenic in both the manufacturing and retail sectors. Although the Agency has not concluded that there is unreasonable risk to the public from these products, we do believe that any reduction in exposure to arsenic is desirable. This action comes years ahead of completing the Agency's regulatory and scientific assessment of CCA and will result in substantial reductions in potential exposure to CCA.

Additional information, including frequently asked questions, is available at: www.epa.gov/pesticides/citizens/cca_transition.htm.

Free Curricula for Childcare Providers!



IDEM now has a website just for childcare providers. This page provides links to free resources on environmental health topics such as asthma, asbestos, mercury, lead, pests, pesticides, treated lumber, radon, and more.

The resources include curricula for preschool-aged children, brochures, pamphlets, handouts, checklists, and so much more. Check it out at:
www.IN.gov/idem/kids/5star/

CPSC Announces Recall Round-Up of Deadly Products

It's time for spring cleaning, and the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) is urging Americans to join its "recall round-up" of 12 hazardous products still found in millions of homes. Most of these have been involved in children's deaths. The goal of this recall round-up is to convince consumers to throw away, repair, or replace these hazardous products. Despite recall notices and public warnings, CPSC believes that many products with the potential to seriously injure or kill are still being used by consumers.

Some of the hazardous products that might be in consumers' homes are dishwashers, window blind cords, playpens, old cribs, old chest freezers, drawstrings around the neck on children's jackets and sweatershirts. See the enclosed press release or check the web at www.cpsc.gov/ for name brands, model numbers and other details.



CPSC's toll-free telephone hotline and web site provide information about recalled products and information on what to look for when buying products. Consumers can reach the hotline at 800-638-2772 or visit the web site at www.cpsc.gov.